

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

1. (currently amended) A method for indexing data items in a database, the method comprising:

retrieving data items from a database, a given data item associated with a respective ranking;

producing a primary index of the data items;

mapping the data items on to at least a first tier and a second tier based on respective rankings of the data items;

producing at least a first and a second sub-index from the primary index based on the mapping;

storing the first sub-index in a first plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a first plurality of columns; and

storing the second sub-index in a second plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a second plurality of columns.

2. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the database is a collection of pages and documents available through the World Wide Web.

3. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the mapping is based on a static relevance score of the data items.

4. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

executing a search query log for a number of queries on the database; and

receiving the results of the search query log;

wherein the first sub-index is based on the results of the query log.

5. (original) The method as recited in claim 3, further comprising:

executing a search query log for a number of queries on the database; and

receiving the results of the search query log;

wherein the first sub-index is based on the results of the query log.

6. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the mapping is based on a value context of the data items.

7. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the data items are web pages and mapping is based on a relevance score of the web pages.

8. (currently amended) A method for searching a database, the method comprising:

retrieving data items from a database, a given data item associated with a respective ranking;

producing a primary index of the data items;

mapping data items on to at least a first tier and a second tier based on respective rankings of the data items;

producing at least a first and a second sub-index from the primary index based on the mapping;

storing the first sub-index in a first plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a first plurality of columns;

storing the second sub-index in a second plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a second plurality of columns;

receiving a search query; and

searching the first tier for result data items relating to the search query.

9. (original) The method as recited in claim 8, further comprising:

searching the second tier for the result data items relating to the search query when the first tier does not yield a threshold number of result data items.

10. (original) The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the second tier is searched when the first tier does not yield a threshold number of result data items.

11. (currently amended) A system for indexing a database, the system comprising:

a crawler which crawls the database to find data items;

an indexer which receives the data items and produces a primary index, a given data item associated with a respective ranking;

a document mapping section which maps data items on to at least a first and a second tier based on respective rankings of the data items;

a processor which produces at least a first and a second sub-index from the primary index based on the mapping;

a first plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a first plurality of columns for storing the first sub-index; and

a second plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a second plurality of columns for storing the second sub-index.

12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) A search engine comprising:

a crawler which crawls a database to find data items;

an indexer which receives the data items and produces a primary index, a given data item associated with a respective ranking;

a document mapping section which maps data items on to at least a first and a second tier based on respective rankings of the data items;

a processor which produces at least a first and a second sub-index from the primary index based on the mapping;

a first plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a first plurality of columns for storing the first sub-index;

a second plurality of search nodes logically arranged in a second plurality of columns for storing the second sub-index; and

a dispatcher which receives a query and forwards the query to a search node in the first plurality of search nodes.

14. (previously presented) The search engine as recited in claim 13, wherein the first and second sub-index are logically arranged in a respective plurality of logical rows.

15. (currently amended) The search engine as recited in claim 13, wherein the dispatcher sends the query to the second tier when the first tier did not produce a thresholds number of result data items.

16. (original) The search engine as recited in claim 13, wherein the dispatcher sends the query to the second tier when the first tier does not yield a threshold number of result data items.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second sub-index are logically arranged in a respective plurality of logical rows.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the first and second sub-index are logically arranged in a respective plurality of logical rows.

19. (previously presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the first and second sub-index are logically arranged in a respective plurality of logical rows.